

Administrative Office of the Courts
Family & Youth Justice Programs
NEWSLETTER



ABOUT US

The Family & Youth Justice Programs (FYJP) at the AOC have expanded to better serve dependency court communities across Washington. We provide statewide training, technical assistance, data and research support to help courts and their partners improve outcomes - for children, families and the professionals who serve them.

This is our inaugural quarterly newsletter, designed to highlight some of the exciting things we're doing. To learn more about FYJP and to access free trainings, resources and tools, we invite you to visit our [website](#).

Upcoming Events

[November Judicial Community of Practice](#)

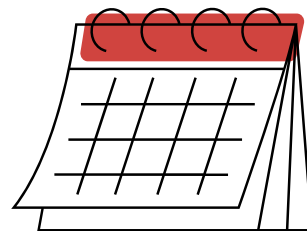
Topic: Working with Lived Experts

November 15, 2023 @ 12:15 pm - 1:15 pm

[January Judicial Community of Practice](#)

Topic: Findings in Dependency & Termination Cases

January 17, 2024 @ 12:15 pm - 1:15 pm



[View FYJP Events Calendar](#)

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ISSUE SPOTLIGHT

USING DATA TO ADVANCE EQUITY & INNOVATION

The Statewide FJCIP Team develops court improvement and data trainings and provides technical assistance to FJCIP courts. The Team has also engaged courts, universities, and national experts to improve the quality and rigor of dependency court research projects.

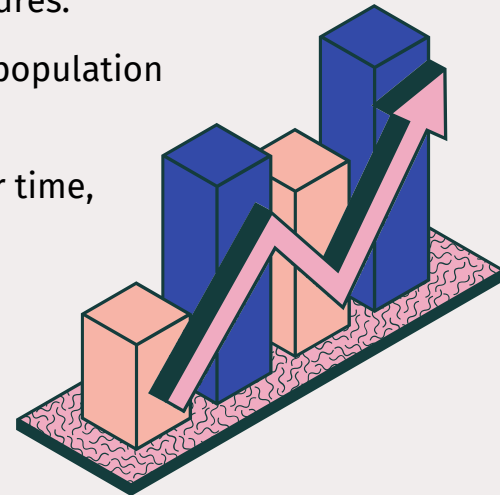


WHAT'S NEW

Washington's Dependency Data Dashboard Adds Race & Ethnicity Measures

The public WA Dependency Data Dashboard added the following features:

- State county map filterable by year and Race/Ethnicity comparing population percentages with dependency filing percentages.
- Dependency filing rates per 1000 population by Race/Ethnicity over time, with ability to filter by county.
- Dependency timeliness measures by Race/Ethnicity, with ability to filter by year and county.
- Point in time look at open dependency cases by Race/Ethnicity – includes median length of stay in placement, filterable by county.
- Permanency outcomes over time by all demographics for placement discharge types (reunification, adoption, age of majority, and guardianship).
- Median length of stay in out-of-home care over time and filterable by year, county, discharge type, and all demographics.



🔗 Access the Dash by [CLICKING HERE](#)

Current Year
Measures and Filings

Measures and Filings
Over Time

Filings, Filing Rates, and
Dependency Measures

Demographics
Data and Race/Ethnicity
Breakdown

Permanency
Outcomes

Court Improvement Program

Implementation of the Keeping Families Together Act (HB 1227)



Launched in 2021, the Keeping Families Together Court Community Initiative is the work of the Family Well-Being Community Collaborative (FWCC). The FWCC was organized into multiple cross-system workgroups dedicated to creating practical resources to help courts and system partners implement historic changes to the handling of dependency cases.

The workgroups were comprised of 85 members from 15 disciplines, including judicial officers, court staff, attorneys, child advocates, community providers, and parents and youth with lived experience in child welfare. They worked collaboratively over 18-months and 25 meetings to analyze how each change in the law would likely impact court process and practice.

The FYJP Court Improvement Program staff, who facilitate the FWCC Workgroups, built on this foundation to create tools, resources, and trainings to support implementation of this historic legislative change, which can all be found on the [Keeping Families Together Act website page](#).



Training

FYJP has trained over **3,000 people** across the state on HB 1227 through virtual and in-person training events, many in partnership with DCYF.

“Truly inspirational, challenging, and collegial...”

-2023 Judicial Academy Participant

“You made me want to keep learning, so good on you/your team. Great work.”

- Regional Webinar Participant

Tools



Harm of Removal Map

Family & Juvenile Court Improvement Program (FJCIP)

Expansion Update: Welcome Grays Harbor, Clark and Yakima Counties

In 2022, the Legislature invested additional funds to improve the FJCIP by:

- fully funding ten existing court coordinator positions,
- expanding to six new courts, and
- creating a statewide team to train and support local courts and to evaluate FJCIP's impact.

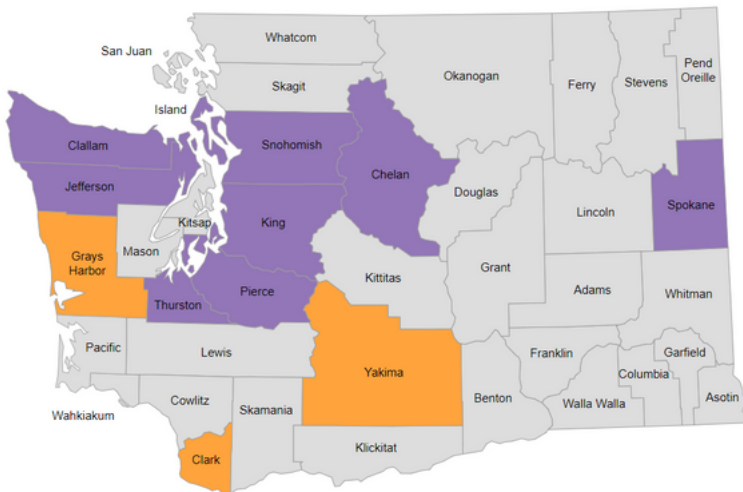


2022 FJCIP Legislative Report

<https://www.wacita.org/2022-2023-fjcip-legislative-report/>

FJCIP is expanding to serve 16 court communities across Washington. In 2023, Grays Harbor, Clark and Yakima Counties joined FJCIP .

Four additional courts will be coming soon!



71% of the state's dependency cases are currently served by 12 FJCIP courts.

[Click Here to Learn More About FJCIP](#)

Collaborative Courts

Collaborative courts utilize multidisciplinary teams with specialized training and access to targeted resources. Guided by core principles, collaborative courts focus on building relationships with families and meeting their individual needs. FYJP provides statewide training, research and technical assistance to the following collaborative courts:

[Click Here to Learn More](#)

Family Treatment Courts

Early Childhood Courts

ICWA Courts

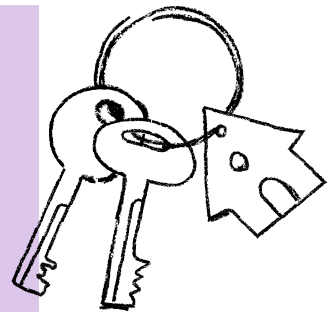
Family Treatment Court (FTC) Team

Collaborating to Expand Housing Opportunities and Transportation Access for Child Welfare-Involved Families

The FTC Statewide Steering Committee is determined to find creative solutions to the most common (and stubborn) systemic barriers families face. Taking an expansive approach to cross-system collaboration, the group has made impressive progress on housing for court-involved families and youth. Next on the agenda - improving access to transportation and behavioral health care!

The **FTC Housing Sub-Committee** brings together a powerful group of policy experts, housing providers and court and child welfare partners. In less than two years, the committee has:

- Supported passage of SB 5256 that provided \$8.7M in new funds for housing support and case managers to help child welfare-involved families and youth find and maintain housing.
- Helped finalize an MOU between DCYF, housing authorities and non-profit housing agencies to earmark over 2,000 housing units statewide for child welfare-involved families.



In May 2023, a new statewide workgroup was created to take on **transportation and access to services**, particularly for rural counties. That workgroup began monthly meetings on May 24, 2023, and will pilot an innovative transportation project in 2024.

[Click Here to Learn More About FTCs](#)

Early Childhood Court (ECC) Team

Supporting Families with Young Children



[Clark County Safe Babies Court](#) recently partnered with a local business and received the first box of Slumberkins Otters to give to families when they join the program. Otter teaches little ones that no matter how far apart families may be, they are always connected by the love they feel in their hearts. Otter comes with a removeable heart to give to a loved one during times when they can't be together.

The [Pierce County Early Childhood Court](#) is piloting automatic eligibility for families with children aged birth to three years-old who have no previous child welfare history. The court team hopes that making families automatically eligible to participate will increase interest in joining ECC and encourage families to learn more about the unique services and supports available.

[Click Here to Learn More About ECCs](#)



ICWA and Tribal Court Partnerships

The 2nd annual *ICWA Conference for the Olympic Peninsula: Pulling Strongly Together* was co-hosted by the Clallam County ICWA Court and Jefferson County Superior Court on October 18, 2023. The event was co-designed with local tribal partners and attended by over 100 people.

The Yakima County Superior Court, the Yakama Tribe, FYJP and Casey Family Programs hosted a kick-off event for Yakima's new ICWA Court on October 30, 2023. Washington State Supreme Court Justice Raquel Montoya-Lewis (Pueblo of Isleta) provided the keynote address.



Commission on Children in Foster Care

FYJP provides staff support to the Commission on Children in Foster Care (CCFC), which is co-chartered by Justice Barbara Madsen and DCYF Secretary Ross Hunter. Established by the Supreme Court of Washington in 2004, the Commission convenes court, child welfare and community partners to meaningfully enhance child welfare system practice. The mission of the CCFC is to provide all children in foster care with safe, permanent families in which their physical, emotional, intellectual, and social needs are met.

Family Well-Being Community Collaborative



[Click Here to Learn More About the FWCC](#)

The Family Well-Being Community Collaborative (FWCC) is a workgroup of the CCFC with the goal of facilitating cross-system collaboration to keep families safely together and to reduce inequities within the child welfare court system. For the past 18 months, the FWCC focused on preparing the system to effectively implement the Keeping Families Together Act (E2SHB 1227). The Collaborative created trainings and resources to help courts and partners understand and apply the new law at the start of a case.

The FWCC will continue working on the harm of child removal and create new workgroups aimed at improving child and family well-being.